

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 10820 01 OF 04 010858Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /106 W  
-----073869 011013Z /21

R 312030Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9432  
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY LISBON  
USNMR SHAPE  
USMISSION USNATO  
USCINCEUR  
DIA WASHDC  
USMISSION USUN  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
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PAGE 02 PARIS 10820 01 OF 04 010858Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 10820

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

GENEVA ALSO FOR SALT AND CCD DELS

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FR, PINT

SUBJECT: THE FRENCH LEFT -- A CHANGING CONCEPTUAL  
FRAMEWORK

SUMMARY: FRENCH LEFT REACTION TO ITS DEFEAT ON  
MARCH 19 HAS EVOLVED SLOWLY OVER THE PAST TEN DAYS,  
BUT IS MARKED BY TWO MAJOR TRENDS. FIRST, THE  
COMMON PROGRAM IS DEAD, ALTHOUGH THE UNION OF THE  
LEFT AS A SIMPLE ELECTORAL ALLIANCE STILL LIVES ON  
FOR REASONS OF POLITICAL NECESSITY. SECOND, BOTH  
SOCIALISTS (PS) AND COMMUNISTS (PCF) REMAIN SOLIDLY  
COMMITTED TO A LEFT STRATEGY, BUT, FOR THE PS AT  
LEAST, ONE WHICH CLEARLY SEPARATES THE TWO LEFT  
CONTENTENDERS. THE SOCIALISTS' DESIRE FOR MORE AUTONOMY  
WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN A NEW PS PROGRAM BY THE SUMMER  
OF 1979 WHICH WILL ATTEMPT TO DEFINE A UNIQUELY PS  
MODEL FOR THE FUTURE OF FRANCE. AS PART OF THIS  
EFFORT, THE SOCIALISTS WILL PROJECT A MORE RATIONAL  
AND RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC IMAGE, AS ALREADY BEGUN WITH  
THE GISCARD-MITTERRAND MEETING, BUT WITHOUT ABANDON-  
ING THE FUNDAMENTAL THESIS THAT ONLY A RADICAL BREAK  
WITH THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM CAN TRULY RESOLVE FRENCH  
PROBLEMS. THE PCF IS KEEPING ITS STRATEGIC OPTIONS  
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PAGE 03 PARIS 10820 01 OF 04 010858Z

OPEN. HOWEVER, HAVING SACRIFICED MUCH OF THEIR  
"EUROCOMMUNIST" IMAGE IN THE HEAT OF THE ELECTORAL  
BATTLE AND NOW ALMOST CERTAINLY DEPRIVED OF THE  
LEGITIMIZING ASSOCIATION WHICH THE SOCIALIST ALLIANCE  
HAD PROVIDED, THE COMMUNISTS ARE CLEARLY IN A PERIOD  
OF DRIFT WHILE THE ELECTORAL DUST SETTLES. THE  
"UNION OF FRENCH PEOPLE" REMAINS THE CENTERPIECE  
OF PCF THINKING, BUT ONE WHICH HAS YET TO BE DEFINED  
IN THIS NEW ERA OF PS/PCF RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. SOCIALISTS IN SEARCH OF AUTONOMY: THE PS HAS  
MADE NO SECRET OF ITS ANALYSIS OF LEFT FAILURE --  
THE COMMUNISTS DESTROYED LEFT UNITY LAST SEPTEMBER 23  
AND SOCIALIST CREDIBILITY ALONG WITH IT. NONETHE-  
LESS, OUR CONTACTS WITH SOCIALISTS OF ALL FACTIONS  
INDICATE THAT ALL (FROM ROCARD TO CERES LEADER  
CHEVENEMENT) REMAIN FIRMLY ATTACHED TO THE LEFT AND  
ARE CONTENT TO BASE FUTURE STRATEGY ON THE EPINAY  
PRINCIPLES OF 1971, I.E., THAT A CLEAR BREAK WITH  
THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS NECESSARY AND THAT SUCH A  
RUPTURE CAN RESULT ONLY FROM A SOCIALIST PARTY ROOTED  
IN THE WORKING CLASS. ON LEAVING THE ELYSEE MARCH 28

MITTERRAND REMARKED THAT EXISTING POLITICAL DIVISIONS  
ARE NOT ARTIFICIAL; THEY REFLECT REAL SOCIAL DIVISIONS  
WHICH ARE THE RESULT OF ECONOMIC STRUCTURES -- "IT  
WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME TO IGNORE SUCH EVIDENCE,"  
WHICH IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THAT, FROM THE PS  
VIEWPOINT, THE GROUND RULES OF FRENCH POLITICS HAVE  
NOT CHANGED ALL THAT MUCH.

2. THERE ARE CERTAINLY DIFFERENCES OF OPINION  
WITHIN THE PS ON THE FORM WHICH TH IS STRATEGY SHOULD  
TAKE, NOW THAT THE COMMON PROGRAM IS DEAD, BUT THERE  
IS GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT THE FUTURE IS ON THE LEFT,

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PAGE 04 PARIS 10820 01 OF 04 010858Z

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PAGE 01 PARIS 10820 02 OF 04 010859Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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PAGE 02 PARIS 10820 02 OF 04 010859Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 PARIS 10820

NOT THE CENTER-LEFT. WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE CERES WHICH STILL FAVORS CLOSER PS/PCF RELATIONS, THE PS ALSO AGREES THAT AN INDEPENDENT, AUTONOMOUS SOCIALIST PROGRAM MUST BE DEVELOPED (TO BE RATIFIED AT THE PARTY CONGRESS IN MID-1979). THIS NEW MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT WOULD CLEARLY SEPARATE THE PS FROM THE PCF, WHILE NOT REJECTING THE ULTIMATE NECESSITY FOR AN ELECTORAL ACCORD JUST BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTIONS -- AT LEAST AS LONG AS THE WINNER-TAKE-ALL SYSTEM REMAINS IN EFFECT. MITTERRAND DESCRIBED THIS LONG-TERM PLAN AS ONE "REDUCING INEQUALITIES, AN INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY, A POLICY OF FULL EMPLOYMENT, DECENTRALIZATION OF INSTITUTIONS, ETC."

3. A NEW SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY: ALTHOUGH THE PS SEEMS LIKELY TO PERPETUATE THE EXISTING CONFRONTATION BETWEEN COMPETING CONCEPTS OF SOCIETY, THE STYLE OF SOCIALIST MANEUVERING WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY MOVE IN A MORE REALISTIC AND MORE RESPONSIBLE DIRECTION. THE PS IS NO LONGER WILLING TO BE TRAPPED IN A POLITICAL ALLIANCE WHERE THE ACTIONS OF ITS COMMUNIST PARTNER CAN UNILATERALLY DAMAGE SOCIALIST CREDIBILITY AS A POTENTIAL PARTY OF GOVERNMENT AND CREATE AN IMAGE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY. IN THAT SENSE, SOME OF GISCARD'S "OPENINGS" CAN BE SEIZED -- FOR EXAMPLE, AS THEY PERTAIN TO ISSUES SUCH AS GREATER PARLIAMENTARY PARTICIPATION AND PERHAPS EVEN CERTAIN FOREIGN

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PAGE 03 PARIS 10820 02 OF 04 010859Z

AFFAIRS INITIATIVES (E.G., DISARMAMENT). IN A SECOND STAGE, SEVERAL PS "TECHNICIANS" WITHOUT ANY POLITICAL BASE, SUCH AS EDGARD PISANI, PIERRE URI AND JACQUES DELORS, COULD MOVE INTO GOVERNMENT POSITIONS. GISCARD SAID MARCH 29 THAT HIS CONCEPT OF "REASONABLE COHABITATION" COULD TAKE AS LONG AS TEN YEARS TO EVOLVE -- THAT IS PROBABLY AN ACCURATE OBSERVATION ON THE NATURE OF THE POST-ELECTION PS BECAUSE, WHILE THERE MAY BE A NEW-FOUND MEASURE OF COOPERATION ON SOME QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WHERE BOTH SIDES WOULD PROFIT, THE CORE OF SOCIALIST STRATEGY REMAINS AN ALL-OR-NOTHING PROPOSITION REQUIRING STRUCTURAL CHANGES RATHER THAN GRADUAL REFORM.

4. THE PCF: ON LEAVING THE ELYSEE MARCH 30, GEORGES MARCHAIS SAID (PREDICTABLY) THAT THE PCF WOULD REMAIN "RESOLUTELY IN THE OPPOSITION", ON THE SIDE OF THOSE WHO VOTED FOR THE COMMON PROGRAM. EVEN WITHIN THAT CONTEXT, HOWEVER, COMMUNIST STRATEGISTS STILL HAVE SOME IMPORTANT DECISIONS TO MAKE. THE ELECTIONS CAN BE CONSIDERED SUCCESSFUL ONLY IN THE SENSE THAT THE EXPECTED PS PREDOMINANCE DID NOT MATERIALIZE (AND LESS IMPORTANTLY THAT PCF DEPUTIES INCREASED IN NUMBER). AS FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT STANDARD OF PCF SUCCESS, THE COMMUNISTS LOST GROUND IN THE POPULAR VOTE (21.4 TO 20.5), AND THIS DURING A PERIOD OF LEFT EXPANSION AND AFTER AN ENORMOUS MOBILIZATION EFFORT. PCF LEADERSHIP CANNOT BE PLEASED WITH SUCH A DEVELOPMENT.

5. UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE: THE 22ND PARTY CONGRESS IN 1975 RATIFIED THE TWO-PRONGED COMMUNIST STRATEGY WHICH WAS INTENDED TO PROJECT A "EURO-COMMUNIST" IMAGE:

-- A LONG-TERM, FUTURISTIC CONCEPT (UNION OF  
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PAGE 04 PARIS 10820 02 OF 04 010859Z

THE FRENCH PEOPLE) PREDICATED ON THE RALLYING OF DIVERSE POPULAR FORCES AROUND THE PCF VANGUARD;

-- AN ELECTORAL STRATEGY (UNION OF THE  
LEFT) TO SERVE AS THE SHORT-TERM, POLITICAL

EXPRESSION OF THE UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE  
AND TO FACILITATE PCF ENTRY INTO THE NATION'S  
POLITICAL LIFE.

PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 1977, THE PCF HAD SUCCEEDED IN  
ADVANCING ALONG BOTH ROUTES SIMULTANEOUSLY, WINNING  
ELECTORAL VICTORIES WITH ONE TACTIC AND WORKING TO  
EXPAND THE PARTY'S OVERALL INFLUENCE IN SOCIETY  
THROUGH THE OTHER (OPENINGS TO CHRISTIANS, THE  
MILITARY, ETC.). HOWEVER, THE SOCIALIST CHALLENGE  
ON THE ELECTORAL FRONT (BY SURPASSING THE PCF IN  
POPULAR APPEAL AND PENETRATING EVEN THE WORKING  
CLASS) FORCED THE PCF TO ABANDON THE UNION OF THE

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PAGE 01 PARIS 10820 03 OF 04 010902Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
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PAGE 02 PARIS 10820 03 OF 04 010902Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 PARIS 10820

LEFT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE ITS POLITICAL IDENTITY.  
THE UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE, HOWEVER, REMAINED  
INTACT ALBEIT DAMAGED; FOR IN REVERTING TO TOTAL  
EMPHASIS ON ITS TRADITIONAL WORKING CLASS BASE AND  
IN RETREATING FROM THE REASSURING CONTEXT OF THE  
UNION OF THE LEFT, THE COMMUNISTS ONCE AGAIN CUT  
THEMSELVES OFF FROM A WIDE RANGE OF SOCIAL GROUPINGS  
WHICH THEY HAD CAREFULLY DEVELOPED FOR A NUMBER OF  
YEARS. MORE IMPORTANTLY PERHAPS, THE PCF  
CHOSE TO CONSCIOUSLY DISMANTLE THE THEORETICAL  
FRAMEWORK WHICH HAD GIVEN THE PARTY A NEW IMAGE  
BOTH IN FRANCE AND ABROAD. WE NOTE THAT PCE CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE MEMBER AZCARATE, IN AN AFP INTERVIEW,  
STATED THAT THE PCF HAD NOT FOLLOWED THE BASIC  
PRINCIPLES OF EUROCOMMUNISM, WHICH CONSIST OF  
"DEVELOPING A VERY BROAD AGREEMENT OF THE POOREST  
CLASSES, IN PARTICULAR WITH THE MIDDLE CLASSES".  
THE PCF, AZCARATE SAID, HAS SET A "NEGATIVE EXAMPLE"  
BY PURSUING POLEMICS AMONG THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT  
RATHER THAN DEVELOPING A "POPULAR CONSENSUS".

6. EUROCOMMUNISM IN REVERSE GEAR: WILL THE PCF REGENE-  
RATE THE UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE, WHICH MEANS OPENING  
ITSELF TO NEW IDEAS AND NEW SOCIAL CURRENTS (E.G., AUTO-  
GESTION, ECOLOGY), OR WILL IT NOW CHOOSE TO REMAIN IN THE  
LENINIST MOLD WHICH HAS MARKED ITS BEHAVIOR FOR THE PAST  
SIX MONTHS? TWO WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS ON THE PCF ARRIVE AT  
VERY DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS. ANNIE KRIEGEL TOLD EMBOFF  
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PAGE 03 PARIS 10820 03 OF 04 010902Z

SHE FAVORS THE LATTER PROSPECT; ALAIN DUHAMEL, DESPITE HIS FREQUENT CLASHES WITH MARCHAIS ON RADIO AND TELEVISION, TOLD US HE LEANS TOWARD THE OTHER OUTCOME. THE CHOICE WILL SAY A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE MUCH PUBLICIZED "EUROCOMMUNIST" IMAGE WHICH THE PARTY HAS CULTIVATED IN RECENT YEARS. PCF ACCEPTANCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC WAY, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD SEEMED TO BE CONFIRMED MOST CONCRETELY THROUGH THE UNION OF THE LEFT -- IN COMMUNIST WILLINGNESS TO PLAY SECOND-FIDDLE IN A SOCIALIST-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT AND THROUGH RECOGNITION THAT THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM COULD ONLY BE A STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS. IN BACKING OUT OF THE UNION OF THE LEFT AT THE LAST MOMENT, IN REVERTING TO THE OLD PRIORITIES BASED ON PARTY PURITY AT THE EXPENSE OF A BROADER SOCIAL INFLUENCE, THE PCF HAS AGAIN RAISED SERIOUS DOUBTS CONCERNING BOTH THE EVOLUTION OF PARTY DOCTRINE AND ITS RELIABILITY AS A COOPERATIVE PARTY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

7. FEW HAVE ARGUED, OF COURSE, THAT THE PCF WAS EVER INTERESTED IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN POLITICAL POWER. THE COMMUNIST GOAL WILL ALWAYS BE HEGEMONY ON THE LEFT AND ULTIMATELY DOMINANCE IN GOVERNMENT. THE UNION OF THE LEFT, HOWEVER, SEEMED TO MANY OBSERVERS TO BE AT LEAST A TACIT RECOGNITION THAT NEITHER GOAL, IN ITS PURE FORM, WAS POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT FRENCH CONTEXT. NOT ONLY HAS THAT IMPRESSION BEEN SWEEPED ASIDE BY PCF ACTIONS IN THE ELECTORAL PERIOD, BUT AT LEAST THREE OTHER FACTORS NOW REINFORCE A PERCEPTION OF MORE HARD-LINE FRENCH COMMUNIST THINKING:

- A CONCEPT OF THE ECONOMY WHICH, AS DESCRIBED BY MICHEL ROCARD, "IS CONCEIVED TOTALLY IN TERMS OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL WITHOUT REALLY CONSIDERING WHAT IS AN OPEN ECONOMY, WITH AUTONOMOUS ENTERPRISES;"

- CONTINUING DEDICATION TO "DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM" AS THE OPTIMUM MODEL FOR PARTY ORGANIZATION

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PAGE 04    PARIS 10820 03 OF 04 010902Z

TION (PARIS 7839);

- FINALLY, CONTINUED ALIGNMENT OF PCF FOREIGN POLICY WITH THAT OF MOSCOW, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CAREFULLY NURTURING AN IMAGE OF INDEPENDENCE, PARTICULARLY ON ISSUES OF HIGH DOMESTIC POLITICAL INTEREST SUCH AS HUMAN RIGHTS. (PCF HISTORIAN JEAN ELLENSTEIN HAS RECENTLY WRITTEN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT DIVISIONS BETWEEN SOVIET AND WESTERN EUROPEAN BRANDS OF COMMUNISM ARE MUCH MORE SERIOUS THAN THE SINO-SOVIET SPLIT BECAUSE THE FORMER ARE IDEOLOGI-



CAL WHILE THE LATTER IS OVER DIFFERING STATE  
INTERESTS). BUT EVEN ON SENSITIVE SUBJECTS  
SUCH AS THE RECENT TREATMENT OF GRIGORENKO AND  
ROSTROPOVICH, THE PCF HAS NICELY TAILORED ITS  
APPROACH SO AS TO AVOID BEING UNNECESSARILY  
OFFENSIVE TO THE KREMLIN.

ON EACH COUNT, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE DONE LITTLE TO CON-  
VINCE THE MANY SKEPTICS THAT THE "EUROCOMMUNIST" LINE WAS

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PAGE 01 PARIS 10820 04 OF 04 010900Z  
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PAGE 02 PARIS 10820 04 OF 04 010900Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 PARIS 10820

ANYTHING OTHER THAN A TACTICAL POLITICAL MANEUVER.

8. PCF AND THE FUTURE: ALTHOUGH THE PCF ACCOMPLISHED SOME OF ITS ELECTORAL OBJECTIVES IN NARROWING THE PS/PCF GAP AND IN INCREASING ITS PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION, THE COMMUNIST IMAGE SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, CERTAINLY IN THE EYES OF THE SOCIALISTS; ADDITIONALLY, SEVERAL PCF WRITERS HAVE PUBLICLY CALLED FOR A "GREAT DEBATE" WITHIN THE PARTY ON ITS FUTURE STRATEGY. THUS THE UNION OF THE LEFT AS A POLITICAL TOOL HAS PROBABLY OUTLIVED ITS DAY-TO-DAY USEFULNESS, LEAVING THE PCF MORE ISOLATED THAN BEFORE AND WITHOUT THE LEGITIMIZING, REASSURING SOCIALIST ALLIANCE WHICH ALLOWED IT TO ESCAPE THE GHETTO OF THE PAST. BUT PARTY MACHINERY REMAINS AS POWERFUL AS EVER AND, ALTHOUGH THE RECRUITING EFFORTS OF THE PAST YEAR FAILED TO PAY ELECTORAL DIVIDENDS, THE PCF WILL PROBABLY TRY TO PRESS FORWARD TOWARD THE ONE MILLION MEMBER TARGET. THE UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE TO BE THE CENTERPIECE OF PCF STRATEGY, BUT ONE WHICH CAN ASSUME EITHER THE HIGH ROAD OF "EUROCOMMUNISM" BY TRULY OPENING THE PARTY TO SOME EXTENT (AND BY IMPLICATION MODIFYING THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM) OR REMAIN ON THE LEVEL OF PURE RHETORIC AS A DISGUISE FOR A CONTINUATION OF MARXIST-LENINIST OBJECTIVES. THE MOST THAT CAN BE SAID AS OF NOW IS THAT THE PCF IS EXAMINING ITS OPTIONS, WAITING AS WELL TO SEE WHAT BECOMES OF PS STRATEGY.

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PAGE 03 PARIS 10820 04 OF 04 010900Z

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**To:** STATE  
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